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HOT ISSUES

**Revisiting Renditions:** An EU Parliament report rehashes Amnesty International allegations and refocuses European media attention on the rendition of suspected terrorists. Articles repeatedly frame the issue in terms of "kidnapping" and "torture." Spain's *El Pais* headlines: "CIA Kidnapped Suspects to Torture in Arab Countries: EU Parliament Finds It 'Unlikely' Governments Were Unaware." France's *Liberation* also highlights European government involvement: "Secret Flights: Europe Closed Its Eyes to CIA Doings." *The Guardian* emphasizes: "1,000 Secret CIA Flights Revealed." An article in *Al-Hayat* entitled "European Confirmation of Flying Prisons" says the report confirms that the CIA handed suspects over "illegally" to countries like Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Afghanistan.

Message:

- ✓ *"Some governments choose to cooperate with the United States in intelligence, law enforcement, or military matters. That cooperation is a two-way street. We share intelligence that has helped protect European countries from attack, helping save European lives." (Secretary Rice) Remarks*
- ✓ *Rendition is a vital tool in combating transnational terrorism. Its use is not unique to the United States, or to the current administration.*
- ✓ *"In conducting such renditions, it is the policy of the United States, and I presume of any other democracies that use this procedure, to comply with its laws and comply with its treaty obligations, including those under the Convention Against Torture." (Secretary Rice)*

HOW WE'RE PLAYING

**Rice and Rumsfeld Show Support for Iraq:** The Secretaries' joint visit to Iraq conveyed a "strong show of support" for the new unity government that played widely in international media, although new incidents of violence - notably the assassination of the new Vice President's sister and four coalition soldiers - are now dominating the news. Arab media coverage of the visit is mostly factual, reflecting US support for a unity government that ends sectarian conflict. European and Latin American media write that "Rice and Rumsfeld set aside differences" and "bury the hatchet" to back the new government.

Message:

- ✓ *"The turning point here is that Iraq now has its first permanent government and that it is a government of national unity and that it now gives Iraq a real chance to deal with the obviously very vexing problems that it has faced."*
- ✓ *"This is an Iraqi government for which more than 11 million Iraqis voted, including Sunnis, in*

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large numbers. And so this is a government that really has a claim to the name 'national unity.'"

✓ "Everybody should understand that the violence is not going to stop immediately, that this is a process now of politics -- politics are never as dramatic as the single election with people with purple fingers. And so this will be a process that will be more difficult to see the breakthroughs. But it is the process that I think now has Iraq on the right roads." (Secretary Rice)

#### LOOKING AHEAD

**"US-Mexico Relations Better than Ever":** Testimony of Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Whitaker before the House International Relations Western Hemisphere Subcommittee played well in Mexico. Press highlighted her comments that bilateral relations now are better than with any previous Mexican government and praise for outgoing Mexican President Fox's economic policy and commitment to democratic principles. The coverage comes in the context of generally supportive daily Latin American media updates on the US immigration reform debate. Commentators note with pride that Latinos are making their presence felt, and hope for a positive result from the planned May 1 demonstrations and boycott.

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